

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

NEWS LETTER



From the NAHA Office to the Association Members

NUMBER 124

EDITOR, KIM HOLLAND

SPRING 2005

TRIENNIAL MEETING APRIL 30, 2005

As a member of NAHA you are invited to the twenty-seventh Triennial meeting of the Norwegian-American Historical Association. Please join us on Saturday, April 30, 2005 at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota.

The membership meeting will begin at 3:30 in the Viking Theater on the ground floor level of Buntrock Commons. Reports and updates will be presented by NAHA staff and committees. We will utilize the technology in the Viking Theater to show you some of what goes on everyday and behind the scenes at NAHA. The Nominating Committee will present a slate of candidates for the 2005-2008 Board of Directors. After the new Board of Directors has been elected, they will briefly meet to elect officers for the upcoming triennium. Following the membership meeting you are invited to a social hour, starting at 5:30. Dinner will be served at 6:30 in the Kings' Room. A banquet reservation form is included in the newsletter. Please join this gathering of members who enjoy and support the Norwegian-American Historical Association.

BANQUET PLANS-GREAT SPEAKER & GREAT COMPANY!

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Kathleen Stokker will be our speaker for NAHA's Triennial Banquet. Dr. Stokker is a professor of Norwegian at Luther College and the author of *Keeping Christmas, Yuletide Traditions in Norway and the New Land*. She has authored other articles and books on Norwegian and Norwegian-American topics. Dr. Stokker has used the NAHA archives and a wide variety of other archives in her extensive work. Her upcoming book, *Remedies and Rituals: Folk Medicine in Norway and the New Land* will be published in 2006.

We are delighted with this opportunity to hear Dr. Stokker's experiences as a researcher and an author in her presentation, called the "Journey of Discovery." The author of historical material is often like a detective! Pursuing leads and bits of information has taken Stokker to unexpected places, new encounters and some unexpected results. We know it will be interesting to hear how she has unraveled some mysteries, and uncovered long-lost material in her "Journey of Discovery." Dr. Stokker will share with us a journey that is out of the ordinary. You will be in for an informative evening.

ARCHIVIST FORREST BROWN RETIRES

NAHA has long benefited from the talents of skilled and knowledgeable archivists. Forrest Brown retired from NAHA at the end of 2004. The number of scholars and family historians who have been helped by Forrest over the last fourteen years is too numerous to count. Forrest's true calling is to match people up with the information they seek.

Forrest's knowledge of where to look, who published information on the same topic, finding the family farm, keeping track of family name changes, which newspaper would have been active at that time, and how to find small congregations of Norwegians in any denomination is something to behold! People have told me that "Forrest changed my life!" Because of his help they were able to get their dissertation completed, meet relatives in Norway they didn't know existed or walk the family farm their ancestors left behind. NAHA benefited from and was blessed by Forrest's skills, curious and retentive mind, and his previous experience from his tenure as the College Librarian for St. Olaf College.

Dedicated archivists Beulah Folkedahl and Charlotte Jacobson preceded Forrest at NAHA. Forrest would want to make sure they are not forgotten and clarify that his work and the tremendous growth of the archives was built upon their organiza-

tional skills and knowledge of Norwegian-American life. When Forrest started at NAHA, he did not know the Norwegian language, but through auditing classes and his own efforts he learned to read the Norwegian that helped so many of us over the years. Were you one of those who received a “rough” translation so you could move on to your next phase of research?

Forrest may now be officially retired for a second time, but he has not retired from his long pursuit to record the many Norwegians who lived in Goodhue County, Minnesota. Forrest is undertaking an immense project with his PC and Family Tree Maker software to convert his hand-written notes on Goodhue County Norwegians into an electronic format. There is even talk of a lap top so he can continue his work up at the family cabin near Grand Marais! In addition the sharing of his many talents with NAHA members and patrons, we thank Forrest for his gentle enthusiasm when helping people. We wish Forrest and his wife, Virley well in this second retirement. Thank you, Forrest, for your kind and generous help over the years.

TENDING THE NAHA ARCHIVES

NAHA and St. Olaf College have entered into an agreement for part-time archival services. Dr. Gary Dekrey, Curator for the St. Olaf Center for College History, and his associate Jeff Sauve will serve as the archival staff for NAHA. Together with the docents trained by Forrest Brown, NAHA will continue to catalog, collect and preserve documents related to Norwegian-American life and assist researchers of all varieties.

Using the NAHA archives is still an easy process – we ask that you make an appointment so we know there will be someone to assist you. Call 507.646.3221 to make an appointment or email us at naha@stolaf.edu. Members are charged a \$5 per day user fee and non-members are charged \$10 per day.

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

Over the decades a long-time NAHA member has compiled a complete set of NAHA publications. He has now decided it is time to share this complete collection with someone who cares about Norwegian American history. Mr. Larson is hoping to sell the

collection to a person who shares this special interest. For more information contact Lars E. Larson, 381 Eagle Court, Whitewater, WI 53190.

YOUR ESTATE PLANNING AND NAHA

What a wonderful way to leave a legacy - include NAHA in your estate planning! You can join others who value NAHA's important mission and want to be certain that locating, collecting, preserving and interpreting Norwegian contributions to American life remains strong well into the future. The government doesn't do this for us. The other ethnic groups are collecting their own material. Your help is needed to strengthen the wonderful work accomplished by those in the first 80 years of NAHA's work.

Please contact NAHA at 507.646.3221 or email at holland@stolaf.edu and we will send you a brochure to assist your attorney in that important step of including NAHA in your estate planning. Your gift can make a difference now and in the future. The NAHA Board created the Norwegian-American Legacy Circle to recognize individuals who have remembered NAHA in their wills and estate plans. We invite you to join this special circle of individuals who wish to leave a legacy for the future.

2005 NORWAY CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

All across America and Norway celebrations will be taking place to celebrate Norway's independence from Sweden! No matter where you live you will be able to join with others to partake in an independence celebration. A website, www.norway.org will coordinate the events and locations across the two countries. Whether you are in Arizona, Massachusetts or Minnesota there will be a 2005 event in which you can participate.

St. Olaf College along with NAHA will be sponsoring a conference, *Norway and the United States: 1905-2005 A Friendship and Its Future*. Reserve the dates September 23-25th at St. Olaf College. The three sessions on Saturday are inspired by the ongoing dialog between Norway and the United States. The main topics will be “*Society and Community*,” “*Business and Industry*” and “*Science and Technology*.”

Registration will be available on line after June 1, 2005. Please visit the website at www.stolaf.edu/events/norway2005/conference for more detailed information.

ESSAYS AVAILABLE FROM NAHA-NORGE SEMINAR

NAHA-Norway is pleased to announce the publication of Norwegian-American Essays 2004. This is the eleventh book published by the Norwegian chapter. The essays are based on lectures delivered at Seminar VIII in Bergen in 2003. Orm Øverland, editor of this volume, has also written the introduction. Contributors with a wide range of topics are Jon Gjerde, Todd W. Nichol, Knut Kjeldstadli, Betty Bergland, Camilla Cai, Øyvind T. Gulliksen, Terje Joranger, Åse Elin Langeland, David Mauk, Susanne Nevin, Nils Olav Østrem, Charles Russell, Marvin G. Slind, Dina Toflsby. Copies may be ordered from NAHA in Northfield. Email at naha@stolaf.edu or call 507.646.3221. The cost is \$25 plus postage.

The next NAHA-Norway Seminar (IX) will be held at Telemark University College in Bø, Telemark, June 21-23, 2006.

SOMETHING ENTIRELY NEW AND INTERGENERATIONAL!

Opening on Thursday, April 14, 2005 - *Psst!* is a performance based on JASON's beautiful and heart-breaking work. Norwegian artist JASON is widely considered one of the top graphic novelists in the world today and he'll be in Minneapolis to help celebrate the Norwegian Centennial going on all through 2005. His universal stories of love, loss and redemption are told with simple, elegant drawings- hence the term graphic novel.

Comic book critic Dylan Horrocks sums up JASON's work best by saying, "Be careful... It's very, very beautiful but it will utterly break your heart." That's what *Psst!* on stage will do too. Invite your children or grandchildren and do something NEW!

WHEN: April 14 to 30, Thursdays through Saturdays 8pm. **WHERE:** Franklin Art Works, 1021 Franklin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55404. Tickets available at the door or call 612-724-7372 to reserve your ticket in advance.

ADDITIONS TO THE ARCHIVES

Received from Sandra K. Hendrickson, *Foss Family, 150 Years in America 1853-2003*. The author is the great-granddaughter of Ole and Jorun Foss, who left the Numedal Valley in Buskerud in 1853 and settled in central Wisconsin. Hendrickson educates the reader about her search for ancestors in Norway, conditions in Norway at the time of emigration, the actual crossing to America, the pioneers and their descendants. Includes maps, ancestral charts going back to 1439, letters and many photos. Various relatives wrote down their memories of settling in the upper Mid-West, moving around during the Depression years, and then seeking better opportunities on the West Coast in the following generations.

Received from Audrey Erber, *Norwegian Family Histories 1585-1850 -A Peek at the Lives of the Ancestors of our Family who Settled in Columbia County, Dane County and Green County, Wisconsin in the 19th Century*. Spiral bound, 238 pages. A detailed study of her family in Buskerud and Hordaland, Norway. Using parish records, bygde-books, and archives, she has gleaned information about her family going back to the 16th century. Pedigree charts contain some of the basic information for individuals. The book also contains information about the farms on which the family lived and special facts about particular family members.

Received from Ragnar Standal, *Frå Hjørundfjord*, hard-cover, 280 pages, in Norwegian. This is the twenty-sixth book in the series of historical articles about this community. Includes a wide variety of articles and is richly illustrated with photos of the people and a way of life from decades past.

Received from Maxine Lee Shulstad, *Sigrid Nilsdatter's Family, Rollag, Numedal, Norway 1800-1900 Rollag, Minnesota, USA*. Softcover, 178 pages. A fictionalized biography of the author's great-great grandmother who was born in 1798.

A creative account of the life of Sigrid's family until 1868 when several members left for America. Sigrid and her husband Halvor Tostenson, remained in Norway. Surprisingly, one year after Halvor died, Sigrid left Norway to re-join her family and spend her remaining years in Clay County, Minnesota. Contains photographs and imaginative descriptions of family conversations about birth, illness, faith, ocean-travel and forging a new life in America

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through rainstorms, sunshine and snowstorms that became the new reality to immigrant families. More information is available at: www.rollaghistory.com

Received from Steven and Rogers Finch, *Bradt: A Norwegian in Colonial America*, 250 pages, hard-cover. A collection of articles about the family and descendants of Albert Andriessen Bradt and his brother Arent. Albert was born in Fredrikstad in 1607 and moved to Amsterdam, Netherlands with a sizable group of Norwegians. He married a Dutch woman in 1632, and their first children were baptized at the Lutheran church in Amsterdam. Commerce between Norwegian merchants and the Netherlands was quite common. In 1636 a group set off for New Netherlands, (now the United States). Their destination was Rensselaerswyck. Albert worked at a sawmill and a tobacco plantation. Before long his home was known to the local Indians as the Norwegian's Creek. The Dutch version was Noormans kil; today it is still known as Normanskill. The Lutheran church remained a bond between other Scandinavians and a sore point with the Dutch who belonged to the Reformed church.